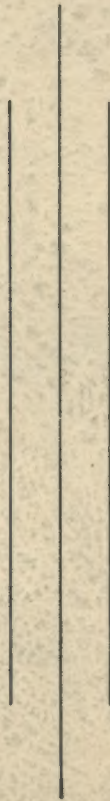


Manitoba Landscape



Lorene Frances Milliken, B.A.



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by

LORENE FRANCES MILLIKEN, B.A.



Carillon Poetry Chapbooks

1954

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To My Sons

WILLIAM DAWES AND DAVID ERSKINE

Clear Lake

Emerald in color
against the rosy hue
of sunset's shadows.

An eagle
losing clutch
on a precious catch
that drops with a splash
causing ringlet upon ringlet
in perfect
circumference to move shoreward
till wave after wave safely
laps the jagged shoreline;

that drops with a splash
to break the silent hush
and thus
startle a grazing bear
and a thirsting white-tail deer
pausing—motionless—breathless —
as though suspended
so lightly does he touch
the earth.

With a quick sudden start
he has disappeared in the dense
underbrush.
A second—
lingering a little longer on the outskirts
leaps to follow
fairy-like in his movement.

A porcupine
slovenly
stubbornly holds
his post
quite sure of his ground and his safety.

A waddling grizzly
lumbering heavily
comes into view.
A vivid contrast to our dainty
gazelles.

Bare-shouldered campers
jostling
soak up the sun's warmth
whilst seeking shelter from cool August's breeze;
Sweating, perspiring beauties—
hairy males—greasy nudes unabashed,
brown-berry babies
enchanted teen-agers
strollers, thinkers,
worriers, gaysters,
all — on the pier.

Towards the town
horse-back riders,
golf enthusiasts,
spooning couples.

Then a visit to a wishing well;
a climb
to Lookout Tower to view
the plains of Dauphin;
strips of farmlands
in varying shades of
green, gold and yellow;
a lake sparkling in the distance;
a backward glance down Norgate Road.
"How high we've come!"
Today's modern vehicle
easily
makes such a grade.
Memory recalls early models
steaming, panting, puffing, choking,
barely making the steep incline.

Ours is an age of mechanical perfection.
Automobiles, launches, yachts, jet planes,
fast-moving ocean liners
both on sea and in the air.

Back again to Wasagaming
to a grinning giant checker board
enjoyed by men of slowing age;
broad tennis courts a-plenty;
swings, slides, teeters, sail boats,
wide lawns, and a pipers' band.

The Museum!
Haven of visitors
seeking educational delight.

Clear Lake!
A Second Emerald!

Here in Manitoba we've an Emerald, too.
O less famed, little renowned, but still a precious
jewel.

Snugly encased, yet not too remotely
In those lesser than the mighty rockies
Yet born of a like glacial upheaval—
The Riding Mountains.

Autumn

Summertime's Marriage to Winter.

For this royal festive occasion
Gathered all lords and their vassals
At the estate in the vale by the lake
A setting adorned and benigned by tricky nature
Rushing torrents down ragged cliffs
Humming waters over smooth granite tables
Rippling river's expanse into space
And tall, tall pines—stalking hunters of winter's
food—

Rigidly standing guard at appointed spots here
and there

Then grouped in a mass ready to plunge
Long pointed swords into enemy hearts;
Or sturdy and straight at attention in long files
All set for his lordship's salute.

All these—armour clad knight bold and brazen
Surrounded by fluttering, flirting and shyly
seducing

Fair ladies-in-waiting
And beautifully buxomed land-lassies,
All gay in the glories of autumn;
Rich red and nimble brown,
Glittering golden and dull bronze,
Lacy mantillas beckoning coveting eyes
Fans moving steadily, rhythmically

Like birds on the wing
Fleeing winter's chill blast
Seeking homes' southern warmth

Through the great iron towered gates
Pass the guests.
Out yonder 'long boulder strewn highway
Gallop crimson-mounted stewards of state.
Behind—the foot patrols
Urging and prodding sound hostages
Seen, sought and captured.
A mighty gift—these power-filled supplicating
giants—
To serf, till and culture new soil.
Over land, over ocean, through air.
From pagoda-like homes
Long suffering little-johns
Surrendering reluctantly, half willingly
To the new world masters.
Fair chance they would find
Good food and safe shelter
Fair play and sound sense
With compassion included.

A gracious lady, a proud lord
Now united till death
Hasten through colored rain and rice showers
Down a gothic arched roadway
Sprinkling its blessings of deep colored leaves.

Now they are masters of a domain of their own
Surrounded by deep creviced walls and wide
gates.

To their castle they hasten
All eyes to explore
The extent of their fields and their forests.
What a joy to produce for retainers as faithful
A gift ne'er others had.

With a "yes M'lord" and "At once, My Lady"
The fruit is gathered and the produce garnered
To be picked and spiced and preserved.
The corn is slaughtered
The maize siloed
The wheat, oats, and barley by combine
miraculous
Is bagged and carted.

Chaff exploded to the sky falls in mountains
of molten gold
Later to blaze in the night.

Timber is felled and saw-cut
Piled in reserve against winters' dread cold.
The surplus is loaded on barge
And tugged far up our lake to a roaring mill
To be pulped and minced
Heated and cooled,
Bleached and rolled
Into huge cylinders of creamy white paper
For news print—pamphlets—
Books and more books.
Who is there can deny the rich glory of a book?
A product of both nature and man.
Without one ne'er the other.
For a poem unrecorded
Is a loss to be abhorred.
While a tree untouched for timber
Remains a beauty not forever.
Comes a fire—comes a storm—
Tall trees are burnt and blast
To lie and rot to death
Unseen, untouched, unused.
But a book remains
To cheer and bless
Uplift and move
One generation on to the next
A record of an age, a time, a scene,
A group, a family, and a soul.
For a mortal is soul's flight in space
A lodging place on earth
For one brief span.
Sometimes the gods permit
One soul to meet its mate
And then we have a poem
A song to record in a tome
Without a tree, without a soul,
Without a mate or knoll,
No poem, no song, no music or book
Alas—the gods forsook!
*(Written following a motor trip to Pine Falls,
Manitoba)*

Camping Out

Our sons, my neighbors' and mine,
Went camping tonight by the creek,
"Just babies really they are."
"Gosh, Mom! We aint afraid."

Off they trundled with bags and tents.
Such eagerness, naivety, bravado.
A storm threatening sky above, too.
"Aw! What's a little rain?"

Fond Moms and Pops stood awaving,
With knuckles gripped white and smiles forced.
"They're such babies, really."
"It will toughen them," Gruffly.

Darkness fell and the rain
In a steady down-pour.
"Our poor bairns, they'll be soaked."
"They can take it. Do them good."

Came morning and noon,
They watched and they waited.
"Yes, there they come,"
A sadly dejected, drenched group.

"Back so soon?"
"Darn the weather."
"It could have been such fun, too."
"But the tents sprung a leak,
And the wood wouldn't burn,
And—Oh gee! but it's good to be home."

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